

THE
CASE
OF
KNEELING
AT THE
Holy Sacrament
STATED & RESOLVED.

PART II.

Wherein these **QUERIES** are considered.

- IV. Whether Kneeling commanded in the Church of *England* be not contrary to the general Practice of the Church of Christ in the first and purest Ages?
- V. Whether it be unlawful for us to Receive Kneeling, because this Gesture was first introduced by Idolaters, and is still notoriously abused by the Papists to Idolatrous ends and purposes.

J. Wank. A. M.

L O N D O N :

Printed for *T. Basset*, at the *George* in *Fleet-street*; and
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mean ends and purposes

J. 1704.

LONDON:

Printed for T. Baskett, at the Grange in Strand; and
B. Toole, at the Sign in St. Pauls Church-yard, 1704.

But before I enter upon this undertaking, I will have leave to make some few observations upon the *Query* itself. We are to understand by this *Query* and words, that as to kneeling in general, it is not a matter of conscience, but a matter of discipline, and therefore it requires that we should not only be obedient to the authority of the Church, but also be obedient to the authority of the Holy Scriptures. And this is the first and principal reason why we should be obedient to the authority of the Church, and not to the authority of the Holy Scriptures.

Query IV.

Whether kneeling, commanded in the Church of England, be not contrary to the sense of the Holy Scriptures, and the primitive Church, as the first and purest Ages?

The only way for any man to give or receive satisfaction in this kind of controversy, is diligently to consult the Records of the Church, and from them make a faithful report of the Customs and Manners of the ancient Catholic Church: For when once these are made manifest, it will be very easy, by comparing things together, to discern whether they are consistent, or contrary, to the Scriptures. Whether the Practice of the Church of England, as to kneeling at the Sacrament, be agreeable or disagreeable to that of the Primitive Church, is the first question in this *Query*, and the bulwark is to give a plain Historical Account of the practice of the Church in those early Ages of Christianity, from whence it may evidently appear, that the Church of England, by obliging her Communicants to kneel, doth not oblige them to practice anything but what is agreeable to the Customs and Practice of pure Antiquity. And this I will endeavour to do, under these Two general Heads.

- (1.) It is highly probable that the Primitive Church used to kneel in the most receiving the Holy Sacrament, as our Customs at present do.
- (2.) It is most certain they used an Adoring Posture.

Of Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament.

But before I enter upon this undertaking, I will crave leave to premise somewhat concerning this Query in general, and somewhat for explication of a Term contained in it, viz. What we are to understand by *The first and purest Ages*.

As to the Case it self in general, it is of such a nature, and requires such an Answer, that not one among Twenty thousand of the ordinary and common sort of people is duly qualified to understand it, and pass a true judgement upon it: the merits of the Cause are quite out of their reach; and whether we are in the right or the wrong they know not, but believe as they are taught, and upon the credit of others who they suppose are able to inform them about such matters. For in order to estimate the present Case aright and as it ought, it is necessary that a man have some competent knowledge of and insight into the Customs and Constitutions of the ancient Church, the Decrees of Councils, the Works of the Fathers, and the Original Languages wherein they wrote; which, I am sure, few or none of the Vulgar have attained to.

And truly upon this very consideration I should have pass'd this Query by without taking the least notice of it, had I not in my converse with several Dissenting Laymen, heard it started and pleaded in justification of their Nonconformity to the Custom and Constitution of the Church of England.

I confess, I did a little wonder to find men make that a Rule of Conscience, (and boldly rely and practise upon it) which they do not at all understand: to find this Weapon put into the hands of ordinary and illiterate persons, not only to defend themselves against the Commands of their lawful Superiours, and those who are set over them by God to be their Rulers and Guides, (In all such cases especially where they are not able to guide and direct themselves) but also to wound and murder the Reputation of the National Church, as degenerate from all Antiquity, as introducing and imposing novel Customs and Ceremonies repugnant to the Principles and Practices of the first and purest Ages.

Whether it be well done in Nonconforming Ministers to furnish the common people with such kind of Arguments as these, so much out of their way, and above their pitch and capacity, I leave the honest part of the world to judge.

The (2) thing I would premise is this: Supposing Kneeling

as

at the Sacrament was never used by the ancient Church, yet such an Objection is a wretched Plea in the mouth of a Dissenter to justify his Nonconformity by as to this particular Gesture.

For if Kneeling be a crime and unlawful, because it was not used in Primitive times, Sitting at the Sacrament is a much greater; for that was condemned as an irreverend Posture, as will appear by and by. Besides, they themselves have a very little value for Antiquity, and in all things almost run counter to it.

And one would think that they should be very willing to receive Kneeling, for that very reason which they produce against it; that is, because it is contrary to the current practice of all Antiquity, as they would make their Party to believe. This might be expected from them, because they will not be persuaded by any means or entreaties to comply with such Customs and Ceremonies of our Church as were undoubtedly used by the ancient Christians: (such as *God-fathers and God-mothers, the Cross in Baptism, the Ring in Marriage, the Feasts or Holy-days of Christmas, Easter, &c.*) but instead of Conformity to these things, they raise an Hue and Cry upon the Church as Popish and Anti-christian for enjoyning such Ceremonies, and pretend they had much rather endure any extremity, than submit their Necks to such an intolerable Yolk. But how hard is the Government put to it to please such humourful persons! When our Governours tread in the very steps of the Primitive Bishops and blessed Martyrs, then they are Popish and Antichristian, and the Consciences of our dissenting Brethren will not suffer them to conform; and at other times they cannot conform, because they require them to do what was never required nor practised in the Church of Christ throughout all preceding Generations, till Transubstantiation was established in the World. So that to follow Antiquity is a great Objection against Conformity at some times, and not to follow it, as great at others: When ever they please to make it so, it is so, say or do what one can to the contrary. Thus much concerning the Case in general: Let us now see the meaning of that Phrase, *The first and purest Ages.*

This, I think, may be easily made out, from the Writings of those men who have stoutly defended Sitting; or a common Table.

Dispute upon
Quest. of
Kneel. &c. to
the Reader.
id. p. 67.

Gillisp. Disp.
against Eng.
Pop. Cer. p.
191. Altar. Da-
mascen. 784.
lib. 1. c. 1.

Histori. Tran-
sub. Papal. Jo-
han. Ep. Du-
nelm. Edit.
1675. p. 53, 54.

Table-Gesture; who have delivered their minds with as much clearness, and as soundly as one would wish, concerning this matter. For thus the Author of a Book solemnly titled affirms, *That Antiquity is wholly against us, and the Primitive Churches never so much as heard of Kneeling; and the Churches succeeding excluded it out of their Congregations; and gave it no Entertainment for the space of 1200 years. That Kneeling to receive the Sacrament, was not used at the Institution of the Lords Supper, nor after in any Age of the Church, before the time of Honorius the Third, about the year 1220. So also another great Champion for sitting writes. Didoclausius maintaineth (saith he) that which none of our opposites are able to infringe, viz. That no Testimony can be produced which may evince that ever Kneeling was used before the time of Honorius the Third. He further observes from the History of the Waldenses, That bowing of the Knees before the Host was then only enjoyed, when the opinion of Transubstantiation got place. By the Practice of the Church in the first and purest Ages, I conceive they mean thus much: That from the Age wherein the holy Apostles lived, down to that wherein Transubstantiation was set on foot, or that wherein Honorius the Third enjoyed the Adoration of the Host, Kneeling in the act of Receiving the Lords Supper was never heard of nor used; or as one Author expressly asserts it, till the year 1220. Howsoever, for sureness sake, and in order to the clearing of this matter under our present Consideration, I think it will be requisite to fix the time wherein Transubstantiation was first brought, as well as when it was established, or imposed as an Article of Faith; and so too wherein the Adoration of the Host was enjoyed: whereby the just bounds and limits will be known, beyond which we are not to pass to fetch in Evidence; and consequently all extravagancy will be prevented on our part, and all cavilling (if possible) on theirs. As for the Time then, which we enquire after, I think we may safely rely on the judgment of a very Learned Prelate of our own, which he delivers after this manner. The word Transubstantiation is so far from being found in the sacred Scriptures, or the Writings of the ancient Fathers, that the great Patrons of it do themselves acknowledge, it was not so much as heard of before the twelfth Century. Nay, that the Thing itself without the Word, that the Doctrine without the Expression cannot be proved from Scripture, is ingenuously acknowledged by the*

the most Learned Schoolmen, who endeavour by other Arguments to defend it, and allow it to be brought in by the Authority of the Pope, and not received in the Church of Rome till three years after Christ. The first Authors who mention this new opinion of *Transubstantiation*, are *Petrus Blesensis*, who lived under Pope Alexander the Third, (about the year 1159) and *Stephanus Radensis*, a Bishop, whose Age and Writings are very doubtful. The Pope who first established this monstrous Doctrine by his own Arbitrary power, as an Article of Faith, was Innocent the Third. And his Successor Honorius was the man who decreed Adoration to the Host. The first Council which took notice and approved of the Papal Decree for Transubstantiation, was that assembled at Constance, which condemned *Wielis* for an Heretick, because among other truths he had asserted this: *That the substance of the Bread and Wine remains materially in the Sacrament of the Altar, and that in the same Sacrament no accidents of Bread and Wine remain without a substance*: and for this Opinion they ordered his Body to be taken out of his Grave, and burnt to ashes. Thus things stood till the year 1551. when the Council of Trent published it to the world for an infallible Truth, and imposed the belief of it upon all, under the pain of an Anathema.

As for the Doctrine of *Consubstantiation*, and the Corporal presence of Christ at, with, and in the Sacrament, it was disputed long before that of *Transubstantiation*, and was much disputed among learned men. He who first brought it in the East, was *John Damascenus*, in the days of Gregory the Third. And about the year a hundred years afterwards it was set a foot in the West, by the means of *Petrus Radensis*, a Monk of *Cornha*, and one *Amalarius*, a Deacon of *Metz*. The former taught that Christ was Consubstantiated, or rather enclosed in the Bread, and Corporally united to it in the Sacrament; for as yet there was no thoughts of the *Transubstantiation* of Bread. The latter gives it as part of his Belief, *That the simple nature of the Bread and Wine mixed, is turned into a reasonable nature*, viz. of the Body and Blood of Christ. Moreover, he in another place confesses, that it was past his skill to determine what became of his Body after it was eaten. *When the Body of Christ is taken with*

Scotus
Denzonius
Bist.
Carnegie
Carnegie

Art. Dom.
1212
Art. Dom.
1212
therabouts

A. D. 1415

Who wrote *de Ecclesiis*, *Officis*, *de vita*, *Antiphon*, &c. contemporary with *Amalarius*, *Fortunatus* Art. Ep. of *Trier*, who wrote *de San. Baptismo* Carol. M.

Antiph. de Ecclesiis
Offic. lib.
3. 2. 3. 35

Amalar. Epist. ad Guitardum MS in Biblioth. Coll. S. Benedic. Cantabri. Cod. 55. cited by A. Bp. Usher, Añf. Jesuits Chall. p. 75. Rabanus Maurus, John Eri-gena Wala. Strabo, Ratra-mus or Bertra-mus.

a good intention, it is not for me to dispute (saith he) whether it be invisibly taken up into Heaven, or kept in our Body until the day of our burial, or exhaled into the Air, or whether it go out of the Body with the Blood, or be sent out by the mouth, &c. For this, and another Foolery of the three parts or kinds of Christs Body, he was censured by a Synod held at Cressy, wherein it was declared by the Bishops of France, That the Bread and Wine are spiritually made the Body of Christ; which being a meat of the Mind, and not of the Belly, is not corrupted, but remaineth unto everlasting life. From whence we may learn (as also from the Writings of several Learned men of that Age who opposed these Dotages of the Corporal presence) that the Western Church had not then adulterated the Doctrine of the Sacrament, but followed the pure and sound sence of the Ancient Fathers, and condemned these Whimseys and gross conceits of the carnal or Oral eating of Christ in the Sacrament. Nay, in the year 1079. when *Hildebrand* called *Gregory* the 7th came to the Papal Chair, the Bishops and Doctors were divided in their Opinions concerning the Corporal Presence; some maintaining *Berengarius* his opinion who denied it, and some following that of *Paschasius*, as appears from the Acts of that Council (writ by those of the Popes Faction) which was called on purpose to condemn *Berengarius*. Moreover, it's recorded that *Hildebrand* himself doubted whether what we receive at the Lords Table be indeed the Body of Christ by a substantial conversion. For three months space was granted to *Berengarius* to consider in; and a Fast appointed to the Cardinals, That God would shew by some sign from Heaven who was in the right, the Pope or *Berengarius*. It seems the Doctrine of the Popes Infallibility was not known to that Age; and that of the Corporal presence much doubted. But however, thus much we may conclude upon, That from the dark and mysterious Writings of those men, *Paschasius* and *Amalarius*, did that monstrous Errour of Transubstantiation spring, which afterwards came to be established as an Article of Faith in the Church of Rome.

As to the time then wherein we are to contain this Discourse, it shall be the first 700 years after Christ; and to Authors onely that liv'd within that compass, I will appeal for evidence in the matter under dispute: and surely our Dissenting Brethren will allow that they lived in the first and purest Ages, because they

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B. no Card. in vita Hild. Epif. Dunelm. Hist. Trans. p. 135.

were dead before the Doctrines either of *Consubstantiation* or *Transubstantiation* were hatcht, much less received or establisht in the World.

If I would take all the advantage that our Adversaries give us, I need not confine my self within so narrow a compass. For they challenge us to produce one instance for Kneeling before the days of *Honorius* the Third, who lived 1220 or thereabouts; and confidently affirm Kneeling was never heard of nor used for 1200 years after Christ. I hope therefore they will not complain of foul dealing, or that I strain the point, since I give away 500 years, wherein the pure ancient Catholick Faith touching the Holy Sacrament began to decline, and was by various arts and tricks at last foully corrupted. Which piece of liberality I need not have exercised, but that I design purely to convince, not to contend. Let us therefore bring this matter under examination, and see what the practice of the Church was within the compass of 700 years after Christ; or, which is all one, in the first and purest Ages. And what I shall produce out of Antiquity, may be conveniently placed under these two general Heads, according to the method proposed in the beginning of this Discourse.

(1) That notwithstanding several Nonconformists, well esteemed of for Learning, have in their Writings boldly asserted Kneeling to be contrary to all Antiquity; it is highly probable the Primitive Christians did Kneel in the act of Receiving, as the Custom is in the Church of *England*.

(2) It's certain they used an Adoring posture.

As to the first, I hope I shall be able to make it good by this following Account which I shall give with all possible plainness and sincerity. And I declare beforehand to all the World, that I will offer nothing for satisfaction to others, which I do not think in my Conscience to be true; and that I would not use a Fallacy to serve the Cause, though I were sure it could never be detected by any of our Separating Brethren. In the first place, for the first Century or 100 years wherein our Lord and his Apostles lived, the Scripture hath left us in the dark, and under great uncertainty what the particular Gesture was which they used at the Institution and Celebration of the Holy Sacra-

Part 1. p. 17. ment; which I think I have sufficiently evinced in my Answers to the first and second Query.

In the next place, I desire those who urge a common Table-gesture, and particularly Sitting (which was a usual posture at Meals among those Eastern Nations as well as among us now) to observe, that Sitting was esteemed a very irreverend Posture to be used in the Worship and Service of God by the Primitive Church; of which I shall give a

Which met under Pope Sylvester 1. between the *Nicenesian* Synod and the first general Council of *Nice*; that is, between the years 314 and 325, as some learned men think; or *Anno Dom.* 365. after the first general *Nicene* Council, as others.

few instances. The ancient *Laodicean* Synod finding great inconveniencies to arise from the Love-Fests which were kept at the same time with the Lords Supper, prohibited absolutely the said Feasts, and the lying upon Couches in

the Church; as their manner was of Solemnizing those Feasts. The words of the Canon are these: *The Feasts of Charity ought not to be kept in the Lords House or in the Church, neither may ye eat or make Couches in the House of God.* This was afterward forbidden by the Council of *Carthage*; and the Decrees of both these Provincial or National Councils were ratified by the 6th *Trullan Council*, and that under the pain of Excommunication: upon which in some time the Custom dwindled to nothing.

Can. 74

Now the Reasons which induced these holy Bishops and ancient Fathers to prohibit these Feasts of Charity, and the use of a discombing posture upon Beds or Couches in the House of God, (which was too, an ordinary Table-gesture according to the custome of those times) were in all probability taken from the Disorder and Irreverence, the Animosities and Excess that accompanied these Feasts, and which both poor and rich were guilty of: They did not distinguish between their spiritual and corporal Food, between the Lords Supper and an ordinary Meal; they did not discern the Lords Body, as *St. Paul* speaks: and I am apt to think that the same abuses which had crept in so early into the Church of *Corinth*, and which *St. Paul* took notice of and reprov'd, continued and spread till the Church by her Censures and Decrees oppos'd the growing evil, and rooted up the causes of such mischievous effects.

To these Canons of Councils, if we adde the Testimony of particular Bishops, who lived in those first Ages, and who speak not their own private sence and Opinions, but Customes and Usages

Usages of the Church in their time; we shall plainly discern that Sitting was accounted an irreverent posture in the Worship of God; while they were engaged in Prayer or Praise, or receiving the Holy Sacrament.

Justin Martyr, who lived in the second Century, which immediately succeeded that of the Apostles, seems to hint that the people sat at the Sermon, and while the Lessons were reading, when he informs us concerning the Christian Assemblies in his time, and the place where he lived: After the reading of the Lessons and the exhortatory Sermon of the Bishop, *we rise up* (saith he) *all together, and send up our Prayers.* He doth not indeed signify what the particular Gesture was which they used at their Prayers, but it's clear enough they did not Sit; and they might Kneel, for any thing he saith to the contrary. For it's customary among us to sit at the Sermon, and during the reading of the Lessons; and after they are ended, we may be truly said to rise up all together, and send up our Prayers: But if any one should hence infer that we stood and not kneeled, he would conclude against the Law of the Land, and the common practice of the Church: Rising up doth not necessarily imply that a man stands or kneels afterwards, but somewhat previous to both; for we generally rise before we do either. But however sitting at the Sermon and Lessons was usual in those Assemblies which this holy Father and Martyr frequented; yet in most other places the people were not permitted to sit at all, not so much as at the Lessons, or in Sermon-time; as appears partly from what *Philostorgius* an ancient Ecclesiastical Historian observes of *Theophilus* an Indian Bishop; That among several irregularities which he corrected in those Churches, he particularly reformed this, *that the people were wont to sit when the Lessons out of the Gospel were read unto them:* And partly from *Saxo's* History, wherein he notes it as a very unusual thing in the Bishop of *Alexandria*, *that he did not rise up when the Gospels were read.*

Flor. Ann. D. 155.

Apol. 2.

Hist. Eccles. l. 3. n. 5. p. 29. Flor. A. D. 425

But the fullest evidence *Optatus* Bishop of *Milevis* affords us, by what he writes against *Parmenianus* the *Donatist*. For after he had taxed him with Pride and Innovation, with a censorious uncharitable spirit which animated all his Tractates or Sermons to the people, he cites a passage out of the *Psalms*, and applies it home to him, after this manner: *Thou fittest and spea-*

Eccles. Hist. l. 7. c. 19. p. 734. Flor. A. D. 440.

Pfal. 49. in our *left against thy Brother, &c.* in which place God reproves him who sits and defames his Brother: and therefore such evil *Teachers* as you (says he) are more particularly pointed at in this Text; *For the people are not licensed to sit in the Church.* This Text chiefly respects the Bishops and Presbyters, who had onely a right and priviledge to sit in the Publick and Religious Assemblies; but doth not concern the people, who stood all the time. Now if it had not been a general and prevailing custom among the Christians of those times, as well Heretical as Orthodox, to stand the whole time of Divine Service, and particularly at the Lessons and Sermons, *Parmenianus* might have easily retorted this Argument upon *Optatus*, as being weak, and concluding nothing against him in particular, but what might be charged in common upon all private Christians who sat in the Church as well as he.

Floruit An. D. Again, that Sitting was esteemed irreverent in the Worship of God, will further be manifested from a passage or two in *Tertullian*, who lived in the same Century with *Justin Martyr* before cited: and I think nothing can be spoken more plain and home to the purpose than what he delivers concerning this Gesture, which is so much contended for by our Dissenting Brethren. For among other vanities and ill customs taken notice of and reproved by this ancient Father, this was one, That they were wont (some of them) to sit at Prayer. A little further

in the same Chapter, *Tertullian* hath these words: *Adde hereunto the sin of Irreverence, which the very Heathen, if they did perceive well and understand what we did, would take notice of. For if it be irreverent to sit in the presence of, and to confront one whom you have a high respect and veneration for, How much more irreligious is this Gesture in the sight of the living God, the Angel of Prayer yet*

Eo apponitur & irreverentiae crimen etiam ipsis nationibus si quid scirent intelligendum. Si quidem irreverens est assidere sub conspectu contraque conspectum ejus quem cum maxime reverearis ac venereris; quanto magis sub conspectu Dei vivi, Angelo adhuc orationis adstante, factum illud irreligiosissimum est? nisi exprobramus Deo quod oratio fatigaverit. Tertull. de Oratione, c. 12.

standing by! unless we think fit to upbraid God that Prayer hath tired us. Adde to all this that saying of *Constantine* the great, recorded by *Eusebius* as an indication of the Piety of that Christian Emperour, with which I will conclude this point. It was upon occasion of a *Panegyrick* concerning the Sepulchre of our Saviour, delivered by *Eusebius*, not in the Church, but in the

Euseb. de vit. Const. mag. lib. 4 p. 400. Col. Allob. 1612.

the *Palace* of the Emperour; and the Historian observes, to the praise of this excellent Prince, that though it was a long and tedious Oration, and though the Emperour was earnestly solicited to sit down on his Throne which was hard by, yet he refused, and stood attentively all the time, as the rest of the Auditory did; affirming it to be *unfit to attend upon any Discourse concerning God with ease and softness; and that it was very consonant to Piety and Religion, that Discourses about Divine things should be heard standing.*

Thus much may suffice for satisfaction, that the ancient Church did by no means approve of Sitting, or a common Table-gesture, as sitting to be used in time of Divine Service, except at the reading of the Lessons, and hearing of the Sermon; which too was onely practised in some places; for in others the people were not allowed to sit at all in their religious Assemblies. Which Custom is still observed in most, if not all the Eastern Churches at this day, wherein there are no Seats erected or allowed for the use of the people.

Now upon what hath been said, I shall onely make this brief Reflection, and so proceed. If the Apostles of our Lord had (in pursuance of their Commission to teach all Nations) in their Travels throughout the World, every where taught and established sitting or discumbing, (which were the common Table-gestures according to the customs of those Eastern Countries) not onely as convenient, but as necessary to be used in order to worthy receiving the Lords Supper; it is a most strange and unaccountable thing how there should be (1) Such an early and universal Revolt of the Primitive Church from the Doctrine and the Constitutions of the holy Apostles; and then (2) Considering what a high value and esteem the Primitive Christians had for the Apostles, the first founders of their Faith, and for all that passed under their names, it seems to me not onely highly improbable, but morally impossible, that so many Churches, together with their respective Bishops and Pastors dwelling in remote and distant Countries, (not bias'd by Faction, nor swayed by a superiour Authority, being perfectly free and independent one upon another) should unanimously consent and conspire together to introduce a novel Custom into the Church of Christ, contrary to Apostolical Practice and Order; and not onely so, but (3) to Censure the practice, and injunctions of divinely

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vincely-inspired men, as indecent and unfit to be followed and observed in the publick Worship of God : and all this without the least notice taken by, without any complaint or opposition from any particular person either in the then present or succeeding generation.

See part 1. p.
58.

(3) The Primitive Church esteemed the Holy Sacrament to be the most solemn part of Christian Worship, as that which deservedly challenged from them the utmost pitch of Devotion, and the highest degree of Reverence that they could possibly pay and express either with their Souls or Bodies. This is clear, partly from those Honorary Titles they bestowed upon this Ordinance and adorn'd it with, which import the greatest reverence and the most awful regard imaginable ; partly from that tedious and severe Discipline which she exercised the Catechumens and Penitents with, before she admitted them into the Communion of the Faithful, and approved of them as fit to partake of the Holy Mysteries. To be admitted to the Sacrament so only as to behold it, and to be present at those Prayers which were put up by worthy Communicants over the great Propitiatory Sacrifice, was heretofore accounted a high honour and privilege : But to make one at this heavenly Feast, and to receive the pledges of our Lords love, was esteemed the top and perfection of Christianity, and the extremity of honour and happiness that a Christian is capable of in this life. Heretofore (with shame and reproach be it spoken to our stupidly wicked and degenerate Age) to be excluded from the Holy Communion, was look'd upon as the greatest curse and punishment that could be inflicted : and on the other hand, to be a Communicant, to have a freedom of access to the Lords Table, as the greatest blessing and most ample reward that could be propounded ; the sum of a Christians hopes, the center of all his wishes during his abode here.

(4.) For standing in time of Divine Service, both at their Prayers and at the Sacrament, there are so many and so clear testimonies extant in pure Antiquity, that a man must take a great deal of pains not to see this truth, who is never so little conversant in the Records of those times : and in such a man it must be height of folly or impudence to deny it. The bare asserting

asserting of it shall be sufficient; because to insist upon the proof of it by an enumeration of particulars, would swell this Discourse beyond measure; and besides, it would be a needless labour, since the great Patrons of sitting, or the common Table-gesture, do frankly own and acknowledge that Standing was a posture generally used by the ancient Church in her religious Assemblies, both at their ordinary Prayers, and at the Communion-service. Howsoever, I shall be forced to say something concerning this matter under the following particular.

*Gill. Diss.
against Ep.
Po. Cer. p. 190,
191.*

(5) Which is this: That the Primitive Christians (though on the Lords days, and for the space of 30 days between Easter and Whitsunday they observed Standing, yet at other times) used the gesture of Kneeling at their publick Devotions. Which will appear from a Decree pass'd in the first general Council assembled at Nice, in words to this effect: *Because there are some* *Can 20 about
the year 325.*
which Kneel on the Lords day, and in the days of Pentecost, (that is, between Easter and Whitsunday) it is therefore ordained by this holy Synod, that when we pay our Vows unto the Lord in Prayer, we observe a Standing gesture, to the end that a uniform and agreeable Custom may be maintained or secured through all Churches. By which Canon provision was made against Kneeling, not as if it were an inconvenient and unbecoming gesture to be used at all in the publick Worship of God, but only as being an irregular and unfit posture to be used at such particular times and occasions as is there specified, viz. on the Lords days, and the Feast of Pentecost; when for any Christian to stand, was to cross the general Custom and Practice of the Church at that time: For this Council did not (you must note) introduce and establish any new thing in the Church, but only endeavoured by its authority to keep alive and in credit an ancient Custom, which they saw began to be neglected by some Christians. And from that clause in the Canon, Because there are some which Kneel on the Lords day and in the days of Pentecost, &c. we may with good reason infer, that Kneeling was the posture that was generally used at other times in their religious Assemblies. For if Standing had been generally observed by all Churches in time of Divine Service at all other times as well as those mentioned in the Decree, what occasion or necessity had there been for such an Injunction, whereby all Christians were obliged to do that which they

Respons. ad
quest. 115. p.
468.

An. Dom. 198.

Die dominico
jejunium nefas
ducimus, vel
de geniculis
adorare.

Tert. de Cor.
mil. c. 3. 206.
Col. Agrip.
edit. 1617.

Epiph. exposit.
Fid. Cathol. p.

1105. edit. Par.
Flor. An. Dom.

390. & sic & to
ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἔχομεν
τοὺς ἡμέτερος
ἐκείνων.

St. Hieronym.

prolog. Com-

ment. In Ep.

ad Ephes.

St. August. Ep.

119. ad 747.

c. 15.

they constantly and universally did before ? There is a passage in the Author of the Questions and Answers in *Justin Martyr*, which will put this matter out of doubt, and give us the reason why they altered their posture on the Lords day : It is (saith he) *that by this means we may be put in mind both of our Fall by Sin, and our Resurrection and Reformation by the Grace of Christ : that for six days we pray upon our Knees, is in token of our Fall by Sin ; but that on the Lords day we do not bow the Knee, doth symbolically represent our Resurrection, &c.* This he there tells us was a Custom derived from the very times of the Apostles ; for which he cites *Irenaeus* in his Book concerning *Easter*. That it was ancient, appears from *Tertullian*, who lived in the same Age with *Irenaeus*, and speaks of it as if it had been establish'd by Apostolical Authority, or at least by Custom had obtained the force of a Law ; for these are his words : *We esteem it a great act of wickedness or villany, either to Fast or Kneel on the Lords day.* Which intimates too, that Fasting and Kneeling in their publick Worship, were both lawful and customary at other times. To whose Testimony if we joyn that of another Father who lived some time after the first general *Nicene Council*, we need not produce any more witnesses to clear the matter. It is that of *Epiphanius* in his Exposition of the Catholick Faith ; where he certifies, *that the weekly stated Fasts (of Wednesday and Friday) were diligently kept by the Catholick Church the whole year round, excepting the fifty days of Pentecost, on which they do not Kneel, nor is there any Fast appointed.* The reason of which Custom was (as both *St. Jerome* and *St. Augustin* attest) because all that space between *Easter* and *Whitsunday* was a time of joy and triumph, viz. over Death and the Grave ; and therefore on these days we neither Fast nor bend our Knees, nor incline and bow down our Bodies, but with our Lord are lifted up to Heaven. *We pray standing (all that time) which is a sign of the Resurrection.* By which posture, that is, we signify our belief of that Article. From whence we may conclude, that as the Christians of those first Ages did at other times certainly Fast, so they did also certainly Kneel at their Prayers in their publick and religious Assemblies.

(6) Another thing I would have observed in order to my present design, is this ; That the Primitive Christians were wont

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to receive the Holy Sacrament every day, as oft as they came together for publick Worship: which Custom as it was introduced and practised by the Apostles themselves (according to the judgement of very Learned men, and that not without good grounds from the Holy Scripture) so it continued a considerable time in the Church, even down to

St. *Ansin*, who flourisht in the beginning of the fifth Century; and seems clearly to intimate to us in his Writings, that it was customary in his days as St. *Ambrose* and St. *Hierome* had hinted before him concerning the Churches of

Millan and *Rome* in their times. From St. *Cyprian* we are fully assured that it was so in his days, viz. about the year 250. For in his explication of that Petition in the Lords Prayer, *Give us this day our daily bread*, he expressly tells us, that they did receive the Eucharist every day, as the food that nourisht them to Salvation. St. *Basil* Bishop of *Cesaria*, who lived about 370 years after Christ, affirms, that in his Church they communicated four times a Week; on the Lords day, *Wednesday*, *Friday*, and *Saturday*; two of which were Station-days, or set days of Fasting which were punctually observed by the generality of Christians in those times. And this I the rather note, because in all probability, since they did receive the Sacrament on these days, they did not alter the Posture of the day, but received Kneeling: For if Kneeling was adjudged by the Catholick Church an unsutable and improper posture for times of mirth and joy, such as the *Lords days* and those of *Pentecost* were; and if they were thought guilty of a great irregularity, who used that posture on those Festivals; then we may reasonably conclude, that Standing, which was the Festival Posture, was not used by the Catholick Church on days of Fasting and Humiliation; and that they who stood at their publick Devotions on Fasting days, were as irregular as they who kneel'd on a Festival. And that this was really so, may, I think, be clearly collected from a passage in *Tertullian* to this purpose; *We judge it an unlawful and impious thing (says he) either to Fast or Kneel at our Devotions on the Lords day. We rejoyce in the same freedom or immunity from Easter to Whitsonide. To be freed and exempted from Fasting and Kneeling, not onely on the Lords day, but all the days of Pentecost, was esteemed a great privilege,*

Ass. Dom. 310. St. Aug. Epist. 118. ad Januarius, c. 2, 3. p. 336. 7. Basil. edit. a Froben. 1541. St. Amb. cap. ult. lib. 5. c. 4. de Sacram. p. 449. Para. St. Hier. adver. Jovinian. p. 37. Paris. id. in Epist. ad Lucianum Botician, p. 71. edit.

Vid. Dr. Cave, Prim. Christ. p. 339. St. Cyp. de Orat. Dom. p. 247. Omon. edit. 1682. Can. 6. Apost. & Antiochen. Council. Can. 2. Basil. Ep. 269. ad Cæsarian. Patrician, To. 3. p. 279.

Tertull. de O. rat. c. 3. p. 206. Edit. Col. A. grip. 1649.

So St. Cyprian
before cited.

and matter of much joy to this Holy Father, and the Christians who lived in his days. And from hence I infer, that at other times, when they met together for publick Worship, (especially on days of Fasting) they generally used Kneeling, and that at the Lords Supper, which was administered every day in the *Africæ* Church, whereof *Tertullian* was a Presbyter. For if they had generally stood at all other times of the year in their religious Assemblies, as well at their Prayers as at the Lords Supper, where is the privilege and immunity they boasted so much of, and rejoiced in, *viz.* that they were freed from Kneeling on such days and at such certain times? Not to Fast on the Lords day was a Privilege, because they did Fast on the Week-days; and so say I of Standing: To Stand on the Lords days, and all the time between *Easter* and *Whitsunday*, could not be thought a special act of favour and the Prerogative of those seasons, if Kneeling had not been the ordinary and common Gesture at all other

Didoelavius his own argument retorted. *Si stabant inter orandum (viz. Die Dominico & toto temporis intervallo inter Pascha & Pentecosten) non est probabile de geniculis adorasse cum precipiente Eucharistiam, sed potius contrarium, nempe stitisse.* Alcar. Damasc. p. 784.

times throughout the year. And if Kneeling was the Gesture which the Christians did then commonly use at their Prayers on the Week-days; then in all

probability, when they received the Sacrament on those days, they received in the ordinary posture.

The (7th) and last particular which I would observe relating to this business, is this: That the Primitive Christians received the Holy Sacrament Praying. The whole Communion Service was performed with Prayer and Praise. It was begun with a general Prayer, wherein the Minister and the whole Congregation jointly prayed *for the Universal Peace and Welfare of the Church, for the Tranquillity and the quietness of the World, for the Prosperity of the Age, for wholesome Weather and fruitful Seasons, for Kings and Emperours, and all in Authority, &c.* The Elements were sanctified by a solemn

Tert. Apol. c. 39. p. 47. St. Aug. Ep. 118. Conf. Apost. l. 2. c. 57. p. 881. St. Chrys. Hom. 1. in 2. cap. Epist. 1. Tim.

Bd. Sac. lib. 4. c. 5. p. 439. See Dr. Cavi's Primitive Christianity. c. 11. p. 347.

Benediction, the form whereof is set down by *St. Ambrose*; and the whole action was concluded with Prayer and Thanksgiving. But that which more particularly affects the matter in hand, is, that the Minister used a Prayer at the delivery of the Sacrament

to each Communicant, to which every one at their receiving said *Amen*.

The Apostolical Constitutions, though in some things much corrupted and adulterated, yet in many things are very sound, and in this particular seem to express the most Ancient Practice of the Church. For there we find this Account.

The Apostolical Constitutions (confessed by all hands to be very Ancient, though not altogether so much as is pretended in some things) give us this plain account in these words: *Let the Bishop give the Sacrifice* (by which name the Holy Sacrament was called in Primitive times) *saying, The Body of Christ: and let him that receives say Amen. Then let the Deacon take the Cup, and at the delivery say, The Blood of Christ, the Cup of Life; and let him that drinketh say Amen.*

Now although it cannot be denied but that these Constitutions are in many things adulterated, yet it is allowed on the other hand, that in many things they are very sincere, and convey to us the pure Practice of the most ancient times. That they give a true and sound account in this matter relating to the Sacrament, we may justly be satisfied, from the concurring Evidence of other ancient Writers who lived in the fourth Century: For both St. Ambrose and St. Cyril of Jerusalem make express mention of the peoples saying *Amen* when the Minister said *The Body of Christ*. So also St. Austin speaks of it as universally practised by the Church of Christ when the Cup was delivered. And there is a very remarkable passage recorded by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History, which being very apposite to our purpose, I will set down for the close of all.

Novatian a Presbyter of the Church of Rome, having renounced the Communion of the Church and the Authority of his rightful Bishop Cornelius, set up for himself, and became the head of an unreasonable and unnatural Schism; and the better to secure to him the Profelytes he had gained, he altered the usual form of Prayer at the Sacrament, and in the room thereof, substituted

Mr. Daillé sets them at the latter end of the 5 Century. Const. Apost. lib 8. c. 13. p. 483.

Καὶ ὁ ἐπίσκοπος παρακαλεῖται τὸν λαόν λέγων· ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ σῶμα τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ὁ ποτήριον τὸ αἷμα τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἀποκρίθεται λέγων· Ἄ멘. ὁ δὲ διάκονος λαμβάνει τὸ ποτήριον, καὶ παρακαλεῖται λέγων· τὸ αἷμα τοῦ κυρίου, τὸ ποτήριον τῆς ζωῆς, καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἀποκρίθεται λέγων· Ἄ멘.

Ambr. de Sac. lib 4. c. 5. p. 440. To. 4. St. Cyril Hiero. Catech. Mystag. 5. Universa Ecclesia accepto Christi Sanguine dicit Amen. Resp. ad Orat. quest. 49. To. 4. p. 691. Basil. 1541.

Epist. Cornel. ad Fab. apud Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 6. c. 35. de Novato.

tuted a new-fangled Oath which he obliged every Communicant to take at the time of their receiving ; which (among other wicked actions) is particularly taken notice of and charged upon him by *Cornelius*, as the worst of all, and the most villanous Innovation. *When he came* (says he) *to offer Sacrifices* (i.e. to celebrate the Lords Supper) *and to distribute to every one his part, at the delivery of* in he constrained those persons who unhappily sided with

Ποιῶντος γὰρ τῆς προσφορῆς, ἡ διακονία ἐκείνη τὴν μυστήριον, ἡ ἐκδοτικὴ τῆν ἐπιτέλεσεν τὴν ἑλουργίαν τῆς πλειστονίας ἀνθρώπων ἀναγκαζέας, ἡ αὖτις τὴν εὐχὴν λαμβάνοντα τὴν ἀφ' ὧν, τὸ Ἀμήν, οὐκ ἐστὶν ὡς ἐπὶ Κορνέλιου.

him to take an Oath, instead of offering up Prayers and Praises according to custom ; and instead of saying Amen, he forced every Communicant when he received the Bread, to say, *I will never return to Cornelius as long as I live.*

From these plain instances we may see how closely our Church follows the steps of pure antiquity in the Form of Prayer appointed to be used by the Minister at the giving of the Bread and the Cup to the people ; which runs thus : *The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and *The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy Body and Soul to everlasting life*, &c. which last Clause was added by latter times, by way of explication, to that short Form which the Primitive Church used : and surely it's every Christians interest, as well as his duty, to join with the Minister in such a Prayer, and return a hearty *Amen* to it.

I will now briefly sum up the Evidence that hath been produced out of Antiquity in justification of Kneeling at the Holy Communion, according to the custom and practice of our Church ; and observe where it directs us to fix, and what to resolve upon. And in this order it lies : Sitting was adjudged by the ancient Catholick Church a very unfit and irreverent posture to be used in time of Divine Service, when they were solemnly engaged in the Worship of God ; the Holy Sacrament was esteemed the most solemn Act or Branch of Christian Worship ; The Primitive Christians generally used standing at their publick Devotions, onely on the Lords days, and all that space of time that falls between *Easter* and *Whitsunday* ; At all other times in their religious Assemblies Kneeling was their Worshipping posture ; and they were wont to meet and receive the Lords Supper every day, and particularly on their stated Weekly Fasts, which they kept every *Wednesday* and *Friday*, when to stand was thought as great an irregularity, as to kneel was on the Lords day : And lastly, the Holy

Holy Sacrament was delivered and received with a Form of Prayer, and that on those days when they constantly prayed Kneeling. All these things therefore being considered, I think the least that can be concluded from them, is what I asserted and designed, *viz.* that in all likelihood the Primitive Christians did kneel at the Holy Communion, as the Custom is in the Church of England: For sitting was generally condemned as an indecent and irreverent Gesture by the Primitive Church; and no man in his wits will say that prostration or lying flat upon the ground was ever used in the act of receiving, or even fit to be so: it must be therefore one of these two; either Standing or Kneeling.

As for Standing all the time of publick Worship which was used onely on the Lords day and in Pentecost, the reason thereof was drawn not from the Sacrament, but from the day and festival season, when they did more particularly Communicate the Resurrection of our blessed Saviour, openly testified their belief of that great Article; at such times therefore they chose standing, as being a gesture suitable to the present occasion, and as an Emblem and sign of the Resurrection.

And from hence I gather, that on their common and ordinary days (when there was no peculiar reason to invite or oblige them to stand at the Sacrament) in all likelihood they used Kneeling, that is, the ordinary posture. They used one and the same posture (*viz.* Standing) both at their Prayers and at the Sacrament on the Lords day, and for fifty days after Easter, contrary to what was usual at other times; and why then should any man think they did not observe one and the same posture at all other times? *viz.* that as at such times they did constantly kneel at their Prayers, so they did also constantly kneel at the Sacrament, which was given and received in a Prayer.

From the strength of these Premises, I may howsoever promise my self thus much success: That whosoever shall carefully weigh and peruse them with a teachable and unprejudiced mind, shall find himself much more inclin'd to believe the Primitive Church used at some times to kneel (as we do) at the Holy Communion, than that they never did kneel at all, or that such a posture was never used nor heard of, but excluded from their Congregations, as some great advocates for Sitting have confidently proclaimed it to the World.

(2.) But secondly, Suppose they never did. Kneel as we do, yet this is most certain, that they received the Lords Supper in an adoring posture; which is the same thing, and will sufficiently justify the present practice of our Church, as being agreeable to that of pure Antiquity. For the proof of this, numerous testimonies both of Greek and Latine Fathers might be alledged, but I will content my self (and I hope, the Reader too) with a few of each sort, which are so plain and express, that he who will except against them, will also with the same face and assurance except against the Whireness of Snow, and the Light of the Sun at Noon-day.

And first for the Greek Fathers, let the testimony of *St. Cyril* be heard, than which nothing can be more plain and express to our purpose: This holy Father in a place before cited, gives instructions to Communicants how to behave themselves when they approach the Lords Table, and that in the act of receiving both the Bread and the Wine. At the receiving of the Cup he

advise thus: *Approach* (says he) *not rudely stretching forth thy hands, but bowing thy self, and in a posture of Worship and Adoration, saying Amen.* To the same purpose St. Chrysostome speaks in his 4th Homily on the 6th Epistle to the Corinthians. Where he

Matth. 2. 1. 11. of the Wise men who adored our Saviour in his Infancy, after this manner : *This Body the Wise men revered, even when it lay in the Manger, and approaching thereunto, worshipped it with fear and great trembling. Let us therefore who are Citizens of Heaven, imitate at least these Barbarians. But thou first this Body, not in a Manger, but on the Altar ; not held by a Woman, but by the Priest. &c.*

Let us therefore stir up our selves, and be horribly afraid, and manifest a much greater Reverence than those Barbarians, lest coming lightly and at a venture, we heap fire on our heads. In another place the

same Father expressly bids them to *fall down and communicate*, when the Table was prepared, and the King himself present: and in order to beget in their minds great and awful thoughts concerning that Holy and Mysterious Feast, he further advises them, *that when they saw the Closed doors opened, then they should suppose* Heaven

Heaven is self was unfolded from above, and that the Angels descended, to spectators I suppose he means of their carriage and behaviour at the Lords Table, and by giving their attendance to grace the solemnity. With the Testimony of these ancient

Writers *Theodoret* concurs, who in a Dialogue between an Orthodox Christian and an Heretick, introduces *Orthodoxus* thus discoursing concerning the Lords Supper. The mysterious Symbols or signs in the Sacrament (*viz. Bread and Wine*) depart not from their proper nature, for they abide in their former Essence, &c retain their former shape and form; and approve themselves both to our sight and touch to be what they were before: but they are considered for such as they are made, (that is, with respect to their Spiritual signification, and that Divine use to which they were consecrated) and are believed and adored as those very things which they are believed to be. Which words clearly import thus much, that the consecrated Elements were received with a Gesture of Adoration, and withal assure us, that such a carriage at the Sacrament was not built upon the Doctrine of Transubstantiation. For there is not a clearer instance in all Antiquity against that absurd Doctrine which the Church of Rome so obstinately believes at this day, than what *Theodoret* furnisheth us with in the words above mentioned. Lastly, (to produce no more out of the Greek Fathers) that story which *Gregory Nazianzen* relates concerning his Sister *Gorgonia*, will serve to corroborate what hath been said, *viz.* That being sick, and having made use of several Remedies to no purpose; at last she resolved upon this course: In the stillness of the night she repaired to the publick Church, and being provided with some of the consecrated Elements which she had reserved at home, she fell down on her knees before the Altar, and with a loud voice supplicated him whom she adored, and in conclusion was made whole. I am not much concerned whether the Reader shall think fit to believe or censure the Miracle; but it's certain, that this famous Bishop hath put it upon Record, and applauds his Sister for the method she used for her recovery, and which speaks home to my purpose; it's clearly intimated that this pious Woman did kneel, or use an adoring posture at least when she eat the Sacramental Bread. And there is no doubt to be made but *Gorgonia* in Communicating observed the same posture that others generally did in publick: She did that in her sickness, which all others were wont to do in their health when they came to the Lords Table; *i. e.* fall down and kneel.

Flor. A. D. 440.

Dialog. 2. To. 4. p. 85. Paris. edit.

Gregor. Naz. Orat. in laud. Gorg. p. 187. Paris. edit. Gregor. Flor. Ann. Dom. 370.

Kneel. For it is not to be imagined that at such a time as this, when she came to beg so great a Blessing at Gods hands in the publick Church at the Altar, stiled by the Ancients the Place of Prayer, she would be guilty of any irregularity, and used a singular Posture different from what was generally used by Christians when they came to the same place to Communicate and Pray over the great Propitiatory Sacrifice; which they esteemed the most powerful and effectual way of Praying, the most likely to render God propitious, and to prevail with him above all other Prayers which they offered at any other time, or in any other place. So much for the testimonies of the Greek Fathers, who were men famous for Learning and Piety in their generations, and great Lights and Ornaments in the Ancient Church. With these the Latine Fathers perfectly agree in their judgements concerning our present subject. And of these I will only mention two (though more might be produced) for brevity sake, and they very eminent and illustrious persons, held in great esteem by the then present Age wherein they flourish'd, and by all succeeding Generations. The first is St. *Ambrose* Bishop of *Milaine*, in a

Flor. A. D.

370.

Psal. 98. Pf. 99.

4. In our Tran.

station.

Ambros. de Sp.

words: That it seems to belong unto the mystery of our Lords

Sto. 13. c. 12. Incarnation;

and then proceeds to shew for what reason it may

be accommodated to that Myserie: and at last

concludes thus: By the Footstool therefore is the earth

to be understood, and by the earth the Body of Christ,

which at this day too we adore in the Sacrament, and

which the Apostles worship in the Lord Jesus, &c.

On the very same words St. *Amilin* (Bishop of *Hippo*)

comments, and to the same purpose. For

thus he resolves that Question, how or in what sense the earth

his Footstool may be worshipped without Impiety? Because he

took earth of the earth, for flesh in of the earth; and he took flesh of the

flesh of Mary. And because he conversed here in the flesh, and gave us his

very flesh to eat unto Salvation. Now there is none who eateth that

may be adored; but first worshippeth. We have found then how this Footstool

may be adored; so that we are so far from sitting by adoring, that

we really sin if we do not Adore. In the judgement therefore of

these Primitive Bishops, we may lawfully adore at the Mysteries,

though

illam manduca-

cat, nisi prius

adoraverit.

though not the Mysteries themselves; at the Sacraments, not the Sacraments themselves; the Creator in the Creature which is sanctified, not the Creature it self: as a late Protestant Writer of prime Quality and Learning among the French, distinguishes upon the forecited words of St. Ambrose.

Phil. Meray
de l'Esprit de
Missa, l. 4. c. 3.
p. 732.

From these few Instances I think it appears evident, that the Primitive Christians used an adoring posture at the Sacrament in the act of receiving. It were easie to heap together many other Witnesses, if it were necessary so to do, either to prove or clear the Cause in hand: but since there is no need, to pester the Discourse with numerous references and appeals to Antiquity, would but puzzle and obscure the Argument, and tend in all likelihood rather to confound and disgust, than convince and gratifie the Reader.

By what hath been alleadged, the practice of our Church in Kneeling at the Sacrament is sufficiently justified, as agreeable to the Customs and Practice of pure Antiquity. For if the Ancients did at the Sacrament use a posture of Worship and Adoration, (which that they did, is very plain) then Kneeling is not repugnant to the practice of the Church in the first and purest Ages; no, though we should suppose that Kneeling was never practised among them: which will appear, if we cast our eyes a little upon that heavy Charge which some of the fiercest but less prudent Adversaries of Kneeling have drawn up against it. They object against Kneeling, as being an Adoring gesture; For they affirm, *That to kneel in the act of Receiving, before the consecrated Bread and Wine, is formal Idolatry. So also to kneel before any Creature as a memorative object of God, though there be no intention of giving divine Adoration to that Creature, is Idolatry.* Now if the Primitive Christians may be supposed to prostrate themselves before the Altar upon their first approach thither in order to receive, or immediately after they had received the Bread and the Cup from the hand of the Minister; or if they bowed their Heads and Bodies after a lowly manner, in the act of Receiving; or if they received standing upright, and eat and drank at the Lords Table with their Hands and Eyes lifted up to Heaven; then they were guilty of Idolatry, as well as we who kneel at the Sacrament, in the judgement of those Scotch Casuists; and consequently, Kneeling at the Holy Communion, according to the Custom of our Church, is not contrary to the practice of the Church of Christ in

Gillies. p. 166.
172 Altar Da-
mal. p. 802.
Ratberf. Di-
vine Right of
Ch. Gov. c. 1.
Qu. 5. Sec. 1-3.

Gilleſp. Diſp.
againſt E. Po.
Cer. p. 291.
Diſp. of kneel.
p. 93.

the firſt and pureſt Ages. For all thoſe poſtures before mentioned were poſtures of Worſhip and Adoration, and uſed as ſuch by the Primitive Chriſtians: eſpecially ſtanding, which is allowed by the Patrons of Sitting to be anciently and moſt generally uſed in time of Divine Worſhip, and particularly in the act of Receiving.

I will conclude all with an Inſtance in their own Caſe about a common Table-geſture. Suppoſe the Primitive Chriſtians did in ſome places receive the Holy Sacrament Sitting, or lying along upon Beds, as the ancient Cuſtom was in thoſe Eaſtern Countries; at their common and ordinary Tables: Put the Caſe that in other places they ſate croſs-legg'd on Carpets at the Lords Supper, as the *Turky* and *Persians* eat at this day; or that they received Standing in other places, according to the common mode of Feaſting; which we will ſuppoſe onely at preſent. Could any man now reaſonably object againſt the lawfulness of Sitting upright at the Sacrament upon a Form or Chair (according to the Cuſtom of *England*) as being contrary to the practice of all Antiquity, who never ſate at all? Certainly no. For though they differ from the Ancients as to the Site of their Bodies, and the particular mode of Receiving, yet they all agree in this, that they receive in a common Table-geſture: They all uſe the ſame Geſture at the Sacrament, that they conſtantly uſed at their civil Feaſts and ordinary Entertainments in the ſeveral places of their abode. And ſo ſay I in the preſent Caſe; What though the Primitive Chriſtians ſtood upright ſome of them at the Sacrament, and others bowed their Heads and Bodies in the Act of Receiving, and none of them ever uſed Kneeling? Yet they and we do very well agree for all that, becauſe we all receive in an Adoring or Worſhipping Poſture. It is one and the ſame thing variously expreſſed, according to the modes of different Countries.

QUE

Query V.

Whether it be unlawful to Receive Kneeling, because this Gesture was first introduced by Idolaters, and is still notoriously abused by the Papists to idolatrous ends and purposes.

AL that is needful to be said for satisfaction in this Case, may be comprized under these two Propositions, which I will endeavour to make good.

(1) It can never be proved that Kneeling, in the Act of Receiving was first brought in by Idolaters, as is pretended and supposed in the Question.

(2) That it is not sinful to use such Things and Rites as either have been or are notoriously abused to idolatry.

As to the first of these Propositions, I have in my Answer to the fourth Query made it (I think) appear very probable; *That the Church of Christ in the first and best Ages did Kneel, as we do at this day, in the Act of Receiving.* And if this be allowed, then they who oppose Kneeling will be unavoidably driven upon one of these two things: Either they must pronounce the Primitive Christians guilty of Idolatry, or not guilty. If they say they were Idolaters, then the former Objection against Kneeling contained in the fourth Query is void of all sense, and falls to the ground; viz. *That Kneeling is contrary to the general practice of pure Antiquity.* If they were clear from Idolatry, then the present Objection comes to nothing; viz. *That Kneeling is unlawful, as being first introduced by Idolaters.*

But secondly, to come close to the Question, let us try if we can find the time *when*, and the idolatrous persons by *whom*

Kneeling was first brought into practice. And surely there are none so likely to inform us, as they who raise the Objection; for if they do not make out these particulars, they talk at random, and say nothing to the purpose. And what are the clear and undeniable Proofs (for such I am sure they ought to be in this case) which they produce to make good this Charge against Kneeling? No other than these, that I can find by my best search into the Writings of the most learned Advocates for Sitting:

Altar. Dama-
scen. p. 542. c.
9. de Adiaph.

Id. c. 10. p. 780.
782.

Kneeling in the Act of Receiving the Eucharist was not known to the Church for a thousand years, &c. It was never known to the Church and Fathers before that monstrous Doctrine of Transubstantiation sprung up and grew strong in the world. It was instituted by Antichrist, and that in honour of the Breasted God, and to confirm the Doctrine of Transubstantiation and the carnal presence. Nay the same Author affirms, that this Gesture was never used before the time of Honorius; and challenges all the world to produce one Testimony before that Age for the use of it; and withal acknowledges at the same time, that Honorius did not institute Kneeling in the Act of Receiving.

784.

This is *Didacoe* alias *Calderwood* his Account; which is so blind and confused, and inconsistent with it self, that it proves nothing, but that the Author had a great mind to say somewhat to the purpose, but knew not what or how. It was unknown, he saith, to the Church for a thousand years; and again, not known till Transubstantiation sprung up and grew to Maturity; and again, never used till the time of Pope *Honorius*, who lived about the beginning of the Thirteenth Century, and came to the Papacy in the year 1216. Now it's strange to me how Kneeling at the Sacrament should be known about a thousand years after Christ, and yet never used till the year 1216, or thereabouts: This is all one with saying, Playing upon Organs was never heard of nor known till the Reign of King *Henry* the Seventh, but then Organs were never play'd upon till King *James* came to the Crown. And then again, though Kneeling was brought in by Antichrist, it was not brought in by *Honorius*, but in his time only. All the light therefore that this Author (who hath taken as much pains, and shewed as much Learning as any man whatsoever in defence of Sitting) affords us, is only this: That Kneeling was brought in at some time or other, but he could not well tell when; and by somebody or other, what do ye call him; but it's uncivil to name names.

The

The other Adversaries of Kneeling are very bold in their general Charge as any men can be, but very shie of coming to Particulars. *The man of sin was the Author and (to make all sure) the Mother of it,* says one. *It grew first from the persuasion of the real presence, and this when Antichrist was at his full height,* says another. *And in the grossest time of Idolatry that the eye of the Christian World hath seen.* If when Honorius (as the Disputer proceeds) made his Decree for Adoring the Sacrament, Kneeling were not in use, what follows from hence? Why when in all probability Kneeling at the Communion was not received into practice in any Age preceding the days of Honorius. But when Honorius made his Decree for Adoring the Sacrament, Kneeling was not in use: that is, If Kneeling were not in use when Honorius made his Decree, then it never was in use before. What shifts are men put to, when they undertake to defend an ill Cause! Who is there so ignorant, as not to know that things may grow out of fashion and use? What for some ages was a general and prevailing Custom, may in tract of time wear off, and dwindle to nothing. I need say no more to expose the weakness of this Argument, than to put it thus: Sitting was not in use in the time of Honorius, therefore in all probability it was never in use in any preceding Age.

After all too, it's strange that Kneeling at the Sacrament should spring (as these Writers affirm) from that monstrous Doctrine of Transubstantiation and a Conceit of the corporal presence of Christ; and not be in use in the days of Honorius when he made the Decree of Adoration. Because that Doctrine had been disputed many years before among learned men, and was established by Papal authority in the year 1215, before Honorius was elected Pope. But to pass by this, it appears from the Writings of these men, that they unanimously agree in this: Kneeling was brought in by the *man of sin*, by *Antichrist*, after *Transubstantiation* sprung up, and in the time of Honorius the Third. They all agree too, in talking confidently and at large concerning this matter, without all Reason or Proof to make out their Assertion, but It is so, and It must needs be so, right or wrong: and the common People swallow all for Gospel, and have got Honorius his name by the end, and so the matter is determined.

However, thus much I think is gained in favour of Kneeling, from what these our great Adversaries say against it; *That it was*

Disp. against
Kneel. p. 99.
Abridg. p. 30,
31.
Disp. p. 99.
p. 94.

Disp. p. 81.

Altar. Dam. p.
784. c. 10.

Mr. Bryant
Apol. for lib.
to tender Con.
p. 75. printed
1662.

Dr. Burg. Anf.
rejoy. to the
Reply to Dr.
Mort. gen. De-
fence, p. 478,
478.

Missal. Rom.
in the Rubr.
set out by Pius
V.

not introduced by any Pope of Rome. For when they say the man of sin was the Mother of Kneeling, and Antichrist brought it in; if they mean by those Phrases (as they generally in their other Writings do) the Pope or the Bishop of Rome, then the matter is out of doubt, they themselves being Judges. Because they expressly affirm, that Kneeling was never practised before Pope Honorius his time; and even then it was not instituted by him, but by somebody else. But if by the man of sin and Antichrist, they mean any number or Society of men, as the *College of Cardinals*, suppose, or some prevailing Faction in a *Provincial or General Council*, spurr'd on by Avarice and Ambition to enlarge and support the Popes Authority; then it's very strange, and unaccountable, that their Constitutions and Decrees for Kneeling should no where be found, nor the least mention made in any Records or Histories concerning such a matter. That there are none such to be met with any where, I will appeal to Mr. Pryme, as good a Verrier as ever lived, and no Friend to Kneeling. *There is not one Canon to be found (says he) made by any General, National, Provincial Council or Synod, from Christs institution of the Lords Supper, till above 1460 years after his ascension: Nor any one Rubrick in all the Liturgies, Writings of the Fathers, or Missals, Breviaries, Offices, Pontificals, Ceremonials of the Church of Rome in self, that I could either find upon my best search, or any other yet produced, enjoining Communicants to Kneel in the Act of Receiving.* Thus that inquisitive Gentleman assure us; and in the same place backs his Report with the authority of the Reverend Dr. Burgess, whom he styles the best and eminentest Champion for this Gesture of Kneeling of all others. The sum of what Dr. Burgess delivers concerning this matter, is this: *That Kneeling in the Act of Receiving was never any instituted Ceremony of the Church of Rome, nor is at this day.* For this he cites Bellarmine and Durantus, who make no mention of Kneeling in the Act of Receiving; though they treat particularly of the Mass, and the Ceremonies of the Roman Church. Instead of this, Durantus affirms, *That the Sacrament ought to be taken Standing; and proves it also. And so doth the Pope himself receive it, when he celebrates; and every Priest by order of the Mass-book, is to partake standing reverently at the Altar, and not Kneeling there.* The people which receive not, as well as they that do receive, are reverently to bow themselves to the Sacrament, not when they receive it, but when the Priest doth elevate the Patin or Chalice for

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for Adoration, or when the Host is carried to any sick person, or in Procession. And this is that Adoration which was first brought in by Pope Honorius the Third, and not any Kneeling or Adoration in the Act of Receiving. For these are the very words of the Decree: *That the Priests should frequently instruct their People to bow themselves reverently at the Elevation of the Host, when Mass was Celebrated, and in like manner when the Priest carried it abroad to the sick.* At the last the Doctor thus resolves upon the Question: *That Kneeling in the Act of Receiving was never any instituted Ceremony of the Church of Rome, nor ever used, when it was used by them, for Adoration to the Sacrament, as is falsely believed and talked of by many.* And with him a learned Papist agrees, who in a Book purposely written for the Adoration of the Sacrament, declareth, That it is not much material in what Gesture it is performed, whether *Sitting, Standing, Lying, or Kneeling.* And in the same place further informs us, That the Kneeling Gesture had not obtained in the Church of Lyons in the year 1555, and when some endeavoured to obtrude it upon that Synod, a stop was put to their proceeding by the Royal Authority.

Nothing needs more be said to give satisfaction in this matter, and fix us, when we have added what a very great man of our own Church now living hath delivered in writing, viz. *Although Kneeling at the Elevation of the Host be strictly required by the Roman Church, yet in the Act of Receiving it is not so manifestly appears by the Popes manner of Receiving, which is not Kneeling, but either sitting, as it was in Bonaventures time, or after the fashion of sitting, on a little leaning upon his Thron, as he doth at this day.*

And now the matter is brought to a fine point. How outrageous have the Adversaries of Kneeling been in their Clamours against the Church of England for appointing a Gesture, that was first introduced and used by Antichrist and idolaters, and when the matter comes to be lifted, not the least proof is produced to make good the Accusation; but, on the other side, it appears that those two Postures which are so earnestly contended for by our Dissenting Brethren, are the very Postures which the man of sin uses at this day himself in the Act of Receiving the Holy Sacrament! When he celebrates Mass himself, and upon some other particular and solemn occasions, he stands; but generally and ordinarily

Ut Sacerdotes frequenter doceant
Necnon sum, ut cum Elevatur Ho-
stia Sacram, quique se reverenter
inclinat. Idem satis quum cum
descent Presbyter infirmum. De-
cret. Greg. l. 3. tit. 41. c. 10.

Epistola de
Ador. Euch.
lib. 2. c. 16.

Dean of St.
Paul's Unrea-
sonableness of
Separation, p.
15.

to stand &
only, which
shows
how manifestly
Antichristian
this is. See
lib. 2. c. 16.
p. 15.

Dr. Burg. law- dinarily he receives sitting, or in a posture very like it. And this
ful of Kneel. I desire may be remembered, against we come to discourse on the
p. 67. second Head, viz. that Kneeling is not therefore sinful, because
it is used by Idolaters.

If any should after all put the Question thus to me: When is it, say you, that Kneeling first commenced in the World; by whose means, and upon what reasons? my plain Answer is, I cannot certainly tell; nor can I find any account thereof among the ancient Records. But this is no Argument *against*, but rather *for* the ancient and universal use of this Gesture: Novel Customs are easily traced to their Originals, but generally the most ancient Usages of every Country are without Father and Mother; and we cannot tell from what source they are derived.

(2.) I am so far from thinking (as our Dissenting Brethren do) that Kneeling owes its birth to the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, that I verily believe the contrary: viz. Kneeling, or an adoring posture used by the ancient Christians in the Act of Receiving, did very much (among other things) conduce to beget and nurse up in the minds of Superstitious and Phanciful men, a Conceit, that Christ was really and corporally present at the Sacrament; which Notion, by subtil and inquisitive heads, was in a little time improved and explained after this manner: That after the Elements of Bread and Wine were consecrated, they were thereby changed into the substance of Christs natural Body and Blood. This I am sure of, that the Patrons of Transubstantiation did very early make use of this very Argument, to prove that they taught and believed no more than what the Primitive Bishops and Christians did. For what else could they intend or mean (say they) by that extraordinary Reverence and Devotion which they manifested when they received the dreadful Mysteries (as they called the Bread and Wine) if they were bare and empty signs onely, and not changed into the very Body and Blood of Christ? which is in effect the very Argument used by

* A Monk of *Algerus*, a stout Champion for Transubstantiation. And † *Coster*, liv'd about the year 1074. is so far from saying † *Coster*. Enchirid. p. 353. edit. 1590. the Pope introduced it,

Cassa enim videtur tot hominum huius Sacramento ministrantium vel adorantium veneranda sedulitas, nisi ipsius Sacramenti longe major crederetur, quam videretur veritas & utilitas; cum ergo exteriora, quasi nulla sint quibus tanta impenduntur venerationis obsequia, aut insensati sumus, aut ad intima mirrimus magna salutis mysteria. *Alger. de Sacramentis*, lib. 2. c. 3.

and that after Transubstantiation took place, that he resolves it into an ancient Custom continued from the Apostles times.

Seeing then upon the whole matter it appears by the confession of some who oppose Kneeling, that *Honorius* did not institute or ordain that Gesture in the Act of Receiving; seeing the Decree which he made, and which others appeal to, doth not at all relate to this matter, but onely to the Adoration of the Host at the Priests elevation of it; seeing no other Pope is alledged as the Author of this Custom; seeing Kneeling was never any instituted Ceremony in the Church of *Rome*, nor is there any Canon or Decree or Rubrick extant which requires the use of that Gesture; seeing the Pope himself, and the Priests who celebrate, use another Gesture in the Act of Receiving; seeing their own Writers look on it as an ancient Usage derived to them from the first and purest Ages: it follows, that what is pretended and supposed in the Question, is without all Warrant and Proof, viz. that Kneeling in the Act of Receiving was first brought in by Idolaters.

And now to close up all, I will appeal to any man of sense and understanding, whether this be not a very silly and extravagant way of Arguing? Kneeling in the Act of Receiving is sinful, because it was first introduced by *Antichrist* and the *man of sin*, and that after the *Doctrine of Transubstantiation* was started and took place in the world; and yet after all (when you come up close to them, and enquire into particulars) they are not able to date the original of it, nor name the Authors who first invented it and set it up. At this rate of talking, it were the easiest matter imaginable to evince that Sitting and Standing were equally unlawful with Kneeling. For it is but affirming boldly that they were first brought in and used by *Idolaters*, and then the work is done effectually. And if such slender Objections must drive us away from the Lords Supper, we shall never communicate as long as we live.

But besides the folly of such Arguments, I think it's a very wicked thing for men to invent and urge them, as the Case stands with us at present: For what is there more desired and wisht for by all good Christians, than Brotherly Love and Concord? than that we may all meet together with one accord, in one place, and with one mind and one mouth glorifie God in the publick Churches? What more talkt of now adays then *Peace and Union*? Whosoever therefore shall any ways obstruct so blef-

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sed and desirable a Work, must be concluded every ill man. And such a one (most certainly) is he (whatsoever we may think of it) who withdraws himself from the Holy Communion upon groundless jealousies and unreasonable fears of incurring the divine displeasure, if he receive Kneeling; and shall go about by the Bugbear-words of *Idolaters*, *Antichrist*, the *man of sin*, to scare weak and honest men from Receiving the Holy Sacrament in our Churches. Because the Lords Supper was instituted for this peculiar end, among others, viz. to be an uniting Ordinance, to bind Christians together in the strictest bonds of Love and Friendship, to dispose and engage them to put on Bowels of Mercy; to exercise the most kind and tender affections, and the most fervent Charity one towards another that is possible for men to do. Those Nonconforming Ministers therefore who possess the people with these Arguments (which they themselves know, unless they be grossly ignorant, to be false and senseless), to render them averse from the Lords Supper as it is administered in our Churches, are in plain English the *Authors* and *Fomenters* of our *Divisions*, and the *Disturbers* of our *Peace*.

2. In the second place (to proceed) it is not unlawful to use such Things and Rites as either have been or are notoriously abused to Idolatry.

Before I produce my Reasons for the proof of this Proposition, I think it will not be amiss to inform the Reader with those Arguments which Dissenters use to overthrow it: and they are these two in general.

Gill. Eng. (1.) *All Things and Rites which have been notoriously abused to Idolatry, if they were such as were devised by man, and not by God and Nature made to be of necessary use, should be utterly abolished, and purged away from divine Worship. But Kneeling in the*
Pop. Cer. c. 2.
Par. 3. p. 130.

Abridgment
of Linc. Min.
p. 17.
Vid. Mr. Hook.
Eccles. Pol. lib.
4. p. 160.

(2.) *To imitate, and agree with Idolaters, by using such Rites and Ceremonies as they do, though in themselves indifferent, and though they contain nothing which is not agreeable to the Word of God, is sinful. So that not to abolish utterly whatsoever we know to have been abused heretofore to Idolatry; to take up any old Heathenish and Idolatrous Customs and Rites, though at present disused by Idolaters, is sinful: and then to use the same Rites*
with

with Idolaters at present, to sort our selves and communicate with them in their Rites, is to partake of their sins, and to become guilty of Idolatry too. Alar. Dam. p. 536, 549.

With these Arguments they make a great noise, and endeavour to confirm them by Scripture and Reason; I shall not offer at a Confutation of these Proofs, which stand built upon a weak and sandy Foundation, upon trifling and sorry Reasons, upon Scripture-Precepts whose sense is horribly wrested, and Scripture-Examples falsely applied and nothing to the purpose. There is a Case of Conscience lately published, wherein the Author hath done this Work to my hands: For he clearly shews, *That a* Case re-
Churches agreeing in some things with the Church of Rome, is no solved; whe-
Warrant for Separation from the Church so agreeing: and particu- ther the Ch.
larly instanceth in our Churches agreement with the Church of of Eng. Sym-
Rome by Kneeling at the Sacrament. There you will find the p. 24. to p. 47.
most considerable Texts and Examples which they drag from p. 38.

Scripture and urge for themselves; rendered utterly unserviceable to their Cause, and rescued from their Tortures.

All that I shall do therefore at present, is only this, briefly to propound my Reasons for the proof of my Assertion; by which I hope to make it evidently appear, that our Dissenting Brethren lie under a great error and mistake, by thinking that all those Rites and Ceremonies which are in themselves indifferent, and of mans devising, ought to be utterly abolished; and become sinful for us to use, purely because they either have been, or are notoriously abused to Idolatry. But here a few things must be premised, to prevent Cavils and Mistakes.

(1.) I take it for granted, that indifferent things may be lawfully used in the Worship of God. This is supposed in the present Question; for otherwise it would be sinful in us to kneel, whether that Gesture had been ever used or abused by Idolaters or no.

See the Case of Indifferent Things.

(2.) I grant that the Worship of God is to be preserved pure from all sinful Mixtures and Dements whatsoever, whether of Idolatry or Superstition; and that things otherwise indifferent, which either in the design of them that use them, or in their own present tendency, do directly promote or propagate such Corruptions, do in that case become things unlawful. To follow Idolaters in what they think or do, is to follow them generally in what they do, without other reason than only the li-

See Dr. Fal. lib. Eccles. p. 443.

king

king we have to the Pattern of their Example, which liking doth intimate a more universal approbation than is allowable; in these cases I think, with the Reverend Mr. Hooker, Conformity with Idolaters is evil, and blame-worthy in any Christian Church.

Hook. Eccl. Pol. l. 4. p. 165.

But excepting these Cases, it is not sinful or blame-worthy in any Society of Christians to agree with Idolaters in Opinion or Practice, and to use the same Rites which they abuse. And consequently, our Church is not to be blamed or charged with Idolatry, for her Agreement with the Church of Rome in using the same Ceremonies, unless it can be proved that the Church of England doth abuse the said Ceremonies to sinful ends; or that the Ceremonies used and appointed by our Church, naturally tend to promote the Corruptions practised in the Church of Rome, and were ill designed; or that she did not follow the general Rules of Gods Word, the Directions of the Holy Ghost in appointing and enjoying the use of Ceremonies, as being godly, comely, profitable; but overlooking all this, had an eye purely to the Example of Idolatrous Papists in what they did amiss.

Art. 20.
Art. 34.
Canon. 18.

Now this I am sure can never be made good against our Church, who hath sufficiently vindicated her self, by the open declarations she hath printed to the World, from all accusations of this nature. Let but any man consult the *Articles of Religion*, the *Preface* to the Book of Common-Prayer just after the *Act of Uniformity*, the two excellent Discourses that follow it concerning the *Service of the Church and Ceremonies*, and the Reasons she hath published at the end of the Communion-service for enjoying her Communicants to receive Kneeling; I say, let any man peruse these, and he will receive ample satisfaction, that our Governours in Church and State in appointing the use of Ceremonies did not steer by the Example of Idolaters, nor enjoy them out of any ill design, or to any ill ends; but were conducted by the light of Gods Word, the Rules of Prudence and Charity, the Example of the holy Apostles, and the Practice of pure Antiquity.

These things being premised, I proceed to prove this Assertion: That it is not sinful to use such Things and Rites as either have been or are notoriously abused to Idolatry: Or, which is all one, That to Kneel in the Act of Receiving according to the custom of the Church of England, is not therefore sinful, because it hath been and is notoriously abused to Idolatry, for these Reasons.

(1.) In

(1.) In general: No abuse of any Gesture, though it be in the most manifest Idolatry, doth render that Gesture simply evil, and forever after unlawful to be used in the Worship of God upon that account. For the abuse of a thing supposes the lawful use of it; and if any thing otherwise lawful becomes sinful by an abuse of it, then it's plain that it is not in its own nature sinful, but by accident, and with respect to somewhat else. This is clear from Scripture, for if Rites and Ceremonies, after they have been abused by Idolaters, become absolutely evil, and unlawful to be used at all, then the Jews sinned in offering Sacrifice, erecting Altars, burning Incense to the God of Heaven, bowing down themselves before him, wearing a Linen Garment in the time of Divine Worship, and observing other Things and Rites which the Heathens observed in the Worship of their false Gods.

No (say the Dissenters) we except all such Rites as were commanded or approved of by God, and such are all those fore-mentioned. But, say I, it's a silly Exception, and avails nothing. For if the abuse of a thing to Idolatry makes it absolutely sinful, and unlawful to be used at all, then it's impossible, to destroy that Relation; and what hath been once abused, must ever remain so: that is, an infinite power can't undo what hath been done, and clear it from ever having been abused. And therefore I conclude from the Command and Approbation of God, that a bare Conformity with Idolaters in using those Rites in the Worship of the true God, which they practice in the Worship of Idols, is not simply sinful, or formal Idolatry; for if it had, God had obliged the Children of Israel by his express Command to commit sin, and to do what he strictly and severely prohibited in other places. In truth, such a Position would plainly make God the Author of sin.

(2.) This Position, That the Idolatrous abuse of any thing, renders the use of it sinful to all that know it, is attended with very mischievous consequences and effects.

First, It intrenches greatly upon Christian liberty, as dear to our Dissenting Brethren as the Apple of their Eyes; and I wonder they are not sensible of it. At other times they affirm that no earthly power can rightly restrain the use of those things which God hath left free and indifferent; and that those things which otherwise are lawful, become sinful when imposed and enjoined.

joyned by lawful Authority: and yet these very men give that power to *Strangers*, both *Hearers* and *Papists*, which they take away from their own *rightful Princes* and *lawful Superiors*. An Idolater may yoke them, when a Protestant Prince must not touch them. And what more heavy and intolerable Yoke can be clapt on our necks than this; That another mans abuse of any thing to Idolatry, though in its own nature indifferent, and left free by God, renders the use of it sinful? Whether this be not a violation of Christian Liberty? let St. Paul determine; who tells us, that *to the pure all things are pure*; and affirms it lawful to eat of such things as had been offered to Idols, and *to eat whatsoever was sold in the shambles*. And what reason is there why a Gesture should be more defiled by Idolaters, than Meat which they had offered up in Sacrifice to Idols? and why should one be sinful and idolatrous to use, and not the other? Certainly St. Paul would never have granted them such a privilege. If he judged it idolatrous to use what Idolaters had abused; especially considering that he in the same Chapter exhorts them earnestly to *free from Idolatry*.

1 Cor. 10. 25,
27, 28, 29.

Verf. 14.

Secondly, This Position subjects the minds of Christians to infinite Scruples and Perplexities; and naturally tends to reduce us to such a state and condition in which both the Jews and Gentiles were, before the glorious light of the Gospel broke out upon the World: that is, it tends to beget and propagate a base servile temper and disposition towards God and to fill us with fears & tremblings when we are engaged in his Worship and Service. Whereas the true and great design of the Gospel is to breed in men a filial cheerful frame of heart, the *spirit of Love*, and of a *sound* or quiet mind; to give us a free, easy, comfortable access to God as to our Father, and to encourage every good man to a diligent, constant, frequent attendance upon the duties of his Worship, by the pleasure and delight that follows them. But now if nothing may be used by us without highly offending God, that either hath been or is abused to Idolatry; who sees not what trouble and distraction will arise in our minds hereupon, when we meet together to worship God? It's well known that most of our Churches were erected by *Idolatrous Papists*, and as much defiled by Idolatry as any Gesture can be; they are dedicated to several *Saints* and *Angels*, whose Images were once set up and adored. Our Bells, Pews, Fonts, Desk, Church-yards, have been consecrated

Rom. 8. 15:
2 Tim. 1. 7.

ted after a superstitious manner; many *Cups, Flasks, Dishes, Communion-Tables*, have been given and used by Idolaters. What now is to be done? If Kneeling at the Sacrament be sinful, because it hath been abused by Idolaters notoriously; so also it is sinful to use any other Thing or Rite that hath, if it be of mans dividing, as the afore-mentioned Writers limit the Question. If Sitting were allowed by Authority, we could not come to the publick Churches, nor to the Sacrament, nor christen our Children for all that, if we know the Pont and other *Ustensils* of the Church were once abused to Idolatry by Papists: We must first make a diligent search, and if certain Information cannot be had, we can't Worship God in publick without panick fears and great disquiet of mind.

But *Thirdly*, Such a Position as this will destroy all Publick Worship. For if nothing must be used which hath been or is abused by Idolaters, it will be in the power of Idolaters, by ingrossing all the outward marks and signs of that inward veneration and esteem which we owe to God, to smother our Devotions, so as they shall never appear in the World; and by that means frustrate the very end and design of Religious Assemblies. And truly this work is already, by the strength of this Principle, very well effected. For *Kneeling at Prayers, and Standing and Sitting, and lifting up the hands and eyes to Heaven, and bowing of the body, together with Prayer and Praise, and Singing, have been all notoriously abused to Idolatry, and are so at this day.*

I know how it will be replied, that they except such things as are necessary to be used in the Service of God; it's absolutely necessary that we worship God, and do him publick Honour; and whatsoever is necessary in order to this, may lawfully be used by us without sin, though the same gestures and signs of Adoration are used and abused by Idolaters.

To this I answer, That this is blinningly, but not honestly and truly said. For the Reasons they give to prove that it is sinful to use the same Rites and Ceremonies with Idolaters at any time, prove it so at all times, and make it for ever so. So long as the Reasons hold to make any thing sinful, so long it is so. If the use or abuse of any thing by Idolaters make it simply evil, then it must for ever remain so; and no necessity whatsoever can take it off, and make it lawful and innocent. If such Things and Ceremonies which are or have been abused to Idolatry, become
sinful

Object.

Answer.

See *Gillies. p.*
128.

1. Reductive,
2. Participative:

Quia Movet.

Quia Movet.

134. 149.

*Gillies. c. 3.
p. 149.*

Direct. of the
day and place
of Worship.

*Rutherf. of
Scandal, Q. 5,
6.*

sinful in these by-respects, and for these reasons, viz. *Because they put us in mind of Idolatry, and preserve the memory of Idols*; and secondly, *Because they move us to turn back to Idolatry, and forsake us with Idolaters*; then it will be ever useful for us to use them. For these Reasons will hold good in things that are of necessary use in the Church, as well as in things that are not necessary: that is, nothing can hinder and destroy these effects; they will ever mind us of, and move us to Idolatry. And from hence I conclude that this Principle is a very false one, and ought to be laid aside. For it is attended with this absurdity: It obliges us utterly to abolish, and forbids the use of all such Rites as have been notoriously abused to Idolatry in some cases, for reasons which eternally hold in all. So that at last it drives us into such straight, that we must sin one way or other. For either we must not worship God in publick, or we must be guilty of Idolatry if we do: And though of two Evils, or Calamities the least is to be chosen, yet of two sins neither is. Christian Religion flows from infinite Wisdom; and the Laws of God do not cross one another, but are even and consistent. We are never cast by God under a necessity of sinning, of transgressing one Law by the observance of another; but thus it must be, if we take up and stick to this Principle.

(3.) Our Dissenting Brethren condemn themselves in what they allow and practise, by the same Rule by which they condemn Kneeling at the Sacrament, and other Rites of our Church. For they themselves did use, without Scruple, such Places and Things, and Postures as had been defiled and abused by Idolaters. They were wont to be bare-headed in time of Divine Worship, at Prayer, and at the Sacrament: and so do Idolatrous Papists: they never affirmed that it was sinful to kneel at our Prayers both publick and private; yet this Gesture the Papists use in their Prayers to the *Virgin Mary*, to the *Cross*, to *Saints and Angels*. They used our Churches, Church-yards, and Bells, and never thought they sinn'd against God by so doing, though they knew they had been abused. Nay, the Directory declares, *That such places are not subject to any such Pollution by any Superstition formerly used and now laid aside, as may render them unlawful and inconvenient.* Mr. Rutherford saith of Bells grossly abused in time of Popery, *That it is unreasonable and groundless, that thereupon they should be disused.* Upon which the Reverend Dr. Faulkner hath this

this judicious Remark: The presence of their convenient usefulness would be no better Excuse on their behalf, than was that Plea for sparing the best of the *Amalekites* Cattel that they might be a Sacrifice, when God had devoted them to Destruction. For if God (as they say) hath commanded that all such Things and Rites should be utterly abolished as were of mans devising, and had been abused to Idolatry; then the convenient usefulness of such Places and Things will never bear them out.

(4) If it be sinful to Kneel at the Sacrament because that Gesture hath been and is notoriously abused by Papists to Idolatrous ends, so also is Sitting, which is contended for with so much shew of Zeal. For the Pope himself sits in the Act of Receiving, as was before noted; and (if any credit be to be given to a Doctor of the Church of Rome) for the same reason which our Dissenters urge for Sitting, *viz.* because the Apostles sat at the first Institution and Celebration of the Sacrament. If any enquire why the Pope Receives Sitting, it may be replied, that he sits that Gesture in remembrance of St. Peter and the other Apostles, who Received the Body of our Lord at the Last Supper Sitting.

Si quisnam quare Dominus Pope Sedendo Communicat, placeat illi, quod hoc fit in recordationem, quod Beatus Petrus et alii Apostoli sedendo Corpus Domini in Coena ultima acceperunt. Alex. Hall, Tract. de Missa, per. 2. Qu. 16. par. 4.

To conclude; If Kneeling be unlawful because it hath been abused to Idolatry, then we must never Receive the Holy Sacrament. For we must Receive in some convenient Posture, such as Kneeling, Sitting, Discumbing, Standing; and yet every one of these either have been or is notoriously abused by Heathens and Papists to Idolatrous ends.

I have now finisht what I undertook; and endeavoured, all that in me lies, to satisfie all honest and peaceable Dissenters that they may lawfully and innocently Kneel in the Act of Receiving the Holy Sacrament. What Success this Discourse will have, I know not; but this I am sure of, it is well meant; and if it be read with the same Charity as it was written; with an honest tractable mind, a mind not pleased with its Scruples, I hope by Gods blessing it will do some good in the World. And really if any of our Dissenting Brethren shall Receive thus much satisfaction from what I have written, That by Kneeling in the Act of Receiving, they transgress no known Law of God, nor act contrary to our blessed Saviours Example; That they do nothing

but what becomes them, and is very futable to the nature of the Lords Supper, nothing but what is agreeable to the practice of the universal Church in the first and purest Ages; I don't see what other Scruples about Kneeling should block up their way to the Lords Table, and hinder them from communicating with us. There are a sort of men, I confess, who separate from our Church, upon whom I despair of doing good by any attempts of this nature; and they are such whose Scruples arise from a vitious Principle, not from the *weakness* of their understandings, but the *obstinacy* of their wills; not from a great fear of offending God which keeps pace with all their actions (for such I have as tender a compassion as any man) but from *Humour*, *Self-Conceit*, *Affectation of popular Applause* and the being thought the wiser and better men, for finding fault with every thing enjoyed by lawful Authority, and every thing that is written in defence of it: Nor upon men whose Scruples against *Government by Bishops*, the *Liturgie* and *Rites* of the Church, arise, not from their *Conscience* but their *Stomachs* from *Pride* and *Ambition* from private *piques* & *disappointments* in the *State*, from *Hypocrisy* and *Interest*, when the more they rail and except against Ceremonies, the better Trade they drive in the World: From such as these I expect nothing but Contempt and Derision, and that the Medicine will be turned into Poison. For as a great man observes on Prov. 14. 6. *He that comes to seek after Knowledge with a mind to scorn and censure, shall be sure to find matter enough for his Humour, but no matter for his Instruction.*

Lord Bacon
Advan. of
Learn. fol.
P 230.

FINIS.

For Kneeling, I never yet heard any thing yet to prove is unlawful. If there be any thing, it must be either some Word of God, or the nature of the Ordinance which is supposed to be contradicted. But (1) there is no Word of God for any Gesture, nor against any. Christ's Example can never be proved to oblige us more in this than in many other circumstances, that are confessed not obligatory. As, that he delivered but to Ministers, and but to a Family, to Twelve, and after Supper, and on a Thursday-night, and in an upper Room, &c. and his Gesture was not such a Sitting as ours. And (2) for the nature of the Ordinance, it is mixt: and if it be lawful to take a Pardon from the King upon our Knees, I know not what can make it unlawful to take a sealed Pardon from Christ (by his Ambassador) upon our Knees.

*Mr. Baxter's Christian Directory,
par. 2. p. 241. Quest. 3. §. 40.*